

REMARKS

Claims 1 through 11 remain pending in the present application. Claim 1 has been amended. Basis for the amendments can be found throughout the specification, drawings and claims as originally filed.

The undersigned attorney would like to thank Examiner Dunwoody for the courtesies extended to him during the personal interview on December 4, 2002. During the interview, Claim 1 and the Aota et al reference were discussed.

REJECTION UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 102(e)

The Examiner has rejected Claims 1 through 4, 6 through 8, 10 and 11 under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) alleging them to be anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,283,867 to Aota et al. The Examiner alleges that Aota discloses Applicants' invention.

Claim 1 further defines the driveshaft assembly interconnect an agricultural driving component of an agricultural machine and an agricultural driven component of an agricultural implement. Also, the joint component of the universal joint operably interconnects one of the first and second shafts to one of the agricultural driving or driven components.

The Aota et al reference relied on by the Examiner fails to disclose or suggest Applicants' invention. The Aota et al reference relates to an elastic shaft joint in a steering column. The joint reduces vibration in the steering column. It was pointed out at the interview that the Aota et al reference neither suggests nor discloses an agricultural environment. The Aota reference neither discloses nor suggests the coupling of the Aota et al device with a tractor or an agricultural implement. Further,

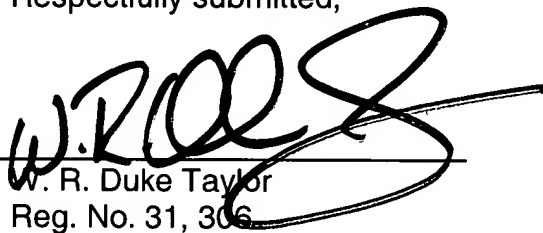
Aota would not provide for the free play to enable the connection and disconnection of the driveshaft assembly. The Aota reference does not provide for the free motion since Aota is always centering the mechanism. Thus, Aota fails to disclose or suggest Applicants' invention. Thus, Applicants believe Claim 1, as well as Claims 2 through 11 which depend from Claim 1, to be patentably distinct over the art cited by the Examiner.

In light of the above amendments and remarks, Applicants submit that all pending claims are in condition for allowance. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request the Examiner to pass the case to issue at his earliest possible convenience. Should the Examiner have any questions regarding the present application, he should not hesitate to contact the undersigned at (248) 641-1600.

Respectfully submitted,

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ATTACHMENT FOR CLAIM AMENDMENTS

The following is a marked up version of each amended claim in which underlines indicates insertions and brackets indicate deletions.

1. (Amended) A drive shaft assembly for interconnecting a driving component of an agricultural machine and a driven component of an agricultural implement, comprising:

a first shaft;

a second shaft engaging said first shaft for enabling torque transmission and relative axial sliding motion therebetween; and

a joint component of a universal joint operably interconnecting one of said first and second shafts to one of the agricultural driving and driven components, said joint component is both rotatable through a specified range of rotation and is fixed from axial movement relative to one of said second shaft, the agricultural driving component of the agricultural machine and the agricultural driven component of the agricultural implement.

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